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National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

The Library of Congress

Reference books to aid in access to information

The first press-braille edition of Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations* (15th edition) is now entering production—a major national project to provide new reference material for blind and physically handicapped individuals. The braille edition, which will take at least a year to complete, will consist of about 106 volumes.

Producing such an extensive work as Bartlett's is possible through a cooperative venture with the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) that also utilizes gift funds to NLS from the estate of Leonard R. Stachura. The gift funds are covering the production costs of the interpoint braille plates. NLS is supervising production and providing reference copies for network libraries. With the permission of the publishers, Little, Brown and Company, NFB will make both hard- and soft-cover editions available at cost for purchase here and abroad.

Judith Dixon, NLS Consumer Relations Section, and Henry Paris, Materials Development Division, examine braille reference materials.

A direct commitment for NLS this year is to expand substantially the provision of new reference works for blind and physically handicapped people. This area is one of the five positive steps Daniel J. Boorstein, The Librarian of Congress, lists for the Library of Congress in *Books in Our Future*, a 1985 report to Congress on "the changing role of the book."

"There's an ever-increasing need for information," says Judith Dixon, head of the NLS Consumer Relations Section. "We keep hearing everywhere that this is an information age, and blind people are experiencing the same need for information as other people. They had less reference material to start with; you can't find these things on newsstands or in public libraries. They hardly exist anywhere."

Braille

Braille reference works have been difficult to provide because of the number of braille volumes involved and the consequent cost of production.

In addition to Bartlett's, other reference books recently selected for the NLS collections include *America in the Twentieth Century*, by Frank B. Freidel; *International Directory of Tactile Map Collections; An Outline History of the World*, by Herbert Davis; *The Reader's Companion to World Literature*, by Lillian Horstein; and *Webster's New Geographical Dictionary*.

These books are shorter references that can be produced through regular funding for braille titles. Some, however, present difficult production problems. The geographical dictionary, for instance, is expected to take about three years to produce, largely because of the need for careful formatting to make a variety of information easy to locate on the braille page.

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Tom Bickford, NLS quality assurance specialist for recorded products, uses the recorded dictionary.

The NLS collections are also being augmented where possible with reference materials that can be purchased from other sources. Two recent selections—*Reader's Guide to Fifty Modern British Plays*, by Benedict Nightingale, and *Reader's Guide to Fifty Modern British Poets*, by Michael Schmidt—are from the Royal National Institute for the Blind in Great Britain.

Cassettes

Reference books on cassette are less bulky and less expensive than those in braille, but are useful only if the material can be indexed so that readers can locate the needed information.

Henry Paris, chief of the NLS Materials Development Division, says, "There have been virtually no recorded reference materials. The first recorded dictionary didn't exist until two years ago, and that was done by NLS." (See *News*, July–September 1983, Vol. 14, No. 3.)

Access to specific entries in long lists of information, such as dictionaries, became possible only with the advent of voice indexing, a technology developed and tested over several years at NLS. Voice indexing uses key words audible in the fast-forward mode to locate entries audible at normal speed.

Besides the 55,000-entry *Concise Heritage Dictionary*, which consists of fifty-six 4-side cassettes and took more than two years to narrate and index, NLS has selected approximately forty books for voice-indexed cassette format since the technique was first introduced in 1979. At least half of these are cookbooks, where the voice-indexing technique is extremely helpful in locating specific recipes. Several works, such as *Standard First Aid, Boy Scout Fieldbook*, and *Rodale's Encyclopedia of Natural Home Remedies*, represent more traditional reference tools.

Recent selections of reference books to be produced on cassette include *English History: A Survey*, by Sir George Clark; *Facts about the Presidents*, by Joseph Nathan Kane; *The Penguin Guide to Medieval Europe*, by Richard Barber; and *Three Centuries of American Antiques*, edited by Marshall Davidson. Either voice or tone indexing, as appropriate, will be used for access to information.

Tone indexing, a less precise forerunner of voice indexing, uses audible beeps instead of key words in the fast forward mode. It is useful for locating large segments of information, such as topical divisions or time periods in a history.

A survey was conducted in 1985 with a scientifically selected random sample of readers to gather information about need for and use of recorded reference materials. Results indicated that respondents overwhelmingly want such material, primarily for personal use. The most frequently reported need was for general medical information, followed closely by encyclopedic information. Findings are being studied and will be used to assist in future selections of reference books on cassette.

Direct mail planned for sports schedules

Patrons will have the opportunity this year to order a new kind of material before publication. The 1986 publications order form lists sports schedules in braille. Items requested on this form are mailed to patrons directly from the producer, in the same manner as braille magazines, and need not be returned to network libraries.

Braille sports schedules have been available for several years on request to network libraries. Seven sports schedules will be produced for the fall 1986 season and for spring 1987. These are for the National Football League, United States Football League, Major Indoor Soccer League, National Basketball Association, National Hockey League, American Baseball League, and National Baseball League.

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READS circulation system ready for network use

READS, the NLS computer software system for automatic circulation of materials to patrons, has completed its developmental phases and is ready for installation in network libraries. It is fully operational in the NLS Music Section and three regional libraries—Kentucky, Mississippi, and South Dakota—that participated in the pilot program. It is currently being implemented at the four NLS multistate centers.

Barbara Tutor, who was NLS automated systems coordinator during the preparation period, said, "We are extremely pleased with the performance of READS and feel that Mobius Management Systems—the contractor that developed READS for NLS—did an outstanding job."

The system can maintain patron and inventory records and handle circulation procedures for libraries serving up to 6,000 patrons. The READS program is available to network libraries from NLS. Libraries must provide the personal computers and other hardware necessary for operation.

Two California subregional libraries, Fresno and San Francisco, began installation of READS in December 1985. They are the first two libraries to install the system after its development and testing, and the first subregionals involved in any phase of the program.

Several other network libraries are in the process of procuring hardware and planning for space and electrical connections. Approximately eight additional libraries anticipate start-up by early fall 1986.

A planning guide is in production for use by libraries considering installing the system. The guide lists materials needed, outlines space considerations, and covers planning for installation and conversion. It is illustrated with photographs showing the different parts of the computer and materials for the system. It also contains case histories describing the different approaches of the three pilot libraries.

Staff members from the pilot test sites met at the Mississippi regional library in June 1985 to evaluate their procedures and experiences with installing READS. This meeting also served as the foundation of a users group to share information and techniques with each other and with other libraries.

Plans are for NLS staff to meet with the users group on an annual basis to continue evaluation of the system and to plan enhancements based on further experiences.

Barbara Tutor

Elizabeth Carl

Tutor leaves; Carl coordinates automation

Elizabeth Carl became assistant to the automated systems coordinator in December 1985. Her appointment coincides with the resignation of Barbara Tutor as automated systems coordinator, and assures continuity in ongoing automation activities that will affect network libraries in the near future.

Barbara Tutor was at NLS for almost two years and was instrumental in establishing the READS automated circulation system and developing NLSNET. Both programs will have considerable impact on activities and procedures in network libraries.

Ms. Carl served as acting assistant to Ms. Tutor for six months beginning in February 1985, during a crucial period in the development of READS. She has been with NLS since September 1977, serving in several capacities that brought her into considerable contact with network libraries.

She sees her role as "automation librarian, helping to translate the operations, needs, and concerns of our network libraries, to alleviate the fear of asking 'dumb' questions about automation, and to continue a specialized interest in automation of reference activities."

Before her current appointment, she was assistant head of the Network Services Section and previously served as acting head of the section for fifteen months. She has also served as assistant head and head of the Resources Coordination Unit, whose functions were assumed by the Network Services Section in 1980.

Ms. Carl has been at the Library of Congress (LC) for fourteen years and was selected for the LC intern program in 1979–1980. She is a graduate of Occidental College in Los Angeles and received a master's degree in library science from Catholic University in 1976.

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Jewish Braille Institute readies large-print Torah

A large-print Torah (the Five Books of Moses), in both English and Hebrew, will soon be published by the Jewish Braille Institute of America (JBI). According to the *Jewish Press*, production of the Five Books of Moses will require a pioneering design effort. For the Hebrew edition, a cantillation mark and vowel signs specially modified for persons with low vision are noteworthy innovations.

The English edition will feature the Jewish Publication Society of America's 1962 translation, and is projected to be in five volumes of approximately 120 pages each. JBI expects to complete it early in 1986. The Hebrew edition, being produced in Israel, will be 550 pages and will be completed in the fall of 1986.

The new Torah joins JBI's large Judaica collection containing materials in large-print, braille, and recorded formats that are loaned free of charge to persons who cannot read regular print. Also included in the JBI program are recorded and braille periodicals such as *JBI Voice* and *Jewish Braille Review* (anthologies of articles in English on Jewish topics from a wide variety of sources); *Or Chadash* (a cassette publication in Hebrew dealing with problems of visual impairment and rehabilitation of blind and partially sighted individuals); and a Jewish calendar in large print and braille.

Materials in English, Hebrew, Yiddish, and other languages can be found in the JBI circulating library.

Other free services for blind and visually handicapped people are:

- braillling and recording services on request for material with Jewish content not available elsewhere
- special assistance to the elderly with vision problems, including family counseling and referral services
- a children's program, including Bar and Bat Mitzvah preparation resources and assistance for dyslexic and learning-disabled children
- services to patrons in forty-two countries besides the United States, including a talking-book library for children and a low-vision clinic in Israel.

For more information on JBI programs, materials, and funding, contact The Jewish Braille Institute of America, Inc., 110 East 30th Street, New York, NY 10016.

Traveling exhibit focuses on vision

Vision: The Precious Treasure is an interactive traveling exhibition designed to "inspire a greater appreciation for the sense of sight," says Wendy Pollock of the Association of Science-Technology Centers, developers of the exhibition.

Sponsored by the Metropolitan Life Foundation, the "Vision" exhibition began its twelve-city, two-year tour in September 1985 at the Museum of Science in Boston, Massachusetts.

The exhibition consists of four areas: how eyes work; how eye care professionals examine eyes; what can be done to treat major eye problems, especially those related to aging; and how technology is helping those with poor vision. The displays include devices that allow participants to study their own eyes, seeing the pupils dilating, examining blood corpuscles, and looking for floaters. Other sections of the exhibition deal with eye examinations and eye care. Visitors can see how glasses and lenses remedy conditions such as nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism.

Along with these other interactive displays is a resource corner designed to simulate a living room modified to aid someone with limited vision. In this corner, visitors may experience braille and recorded books from NLS and examine cassette and disc players. Brochures and print materials from NLS are also included.

The exhibition is scheduled for display at museums and science centers in the following cities: Pittsburgh, Dallas, New Orleans, Midland (Michigan), Cleveland, Tampa, Detroit, Seattle, Oklahoma City, and Philadelphia.

Exhibit update

Council for Exceptional Children has been added to the NLS exhibit program listed in the October–December 1985 issue of *News*. This convention of professionals who work with other-than-average children will be held in New Orleans; exhibit dates are April 1–3.

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Above, the Ad Hoc Audio Equipment Advisory Committee meets. Below, consumer representatives Brian Charlson (left) and Luis Guerrero try E-1 and standard cassette machines during a recess in the proceedings.

Ad hoc audio group assesses equipment

Sixty specific recommendations about playback equipment and its use emerged from the meeting of the Ad Hoc Audio Equipment Advisory Committee held on October 16–18, 1985. All recommendations are being explored by NLS staff and most will be implemented.

Recommendations centered around the need for revision of the instructions for the Easy Cassette Machine, the development of guidelines to assist the network in determining when a machine is unrepairable, the need for a national repair facility for those libraries unable to repair machines, and the drafting of a new application form listing formats available rather than all pieces of equipment.

Instructions for the Easy Cassette Machine have already been revised, as a result of these recommendations and library testing done this fall, to express a more personal, informal approach to understanding the operations of the machine.

Response to other recommendations will be made through a network bulletin to libraries early in 1986 and through a report by the network librarians on the committee at the national conference to be held July 7–11, 1986, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Revisions to the application form will be sent to network libraries for review before changes are finalized.

Committee members also heard progress reports by NLS in four areas of production: cassette machines, nickel cadmium batteries, lightweight headphones, and extension levers. Supplies are now adequate for this equipment.

Representatives on the committee include consumers, Telephone Pioneers, and network librarians. Consumer representatives are Brian Charlson, American Council of the Blind; Dr. T.V. Cranmer, National Federation of the Blind; and Luis Guerrero, Blinded Veterans Association. Telephone Pioneer representatives are Lyal Lauersodorf, Midlands Conference; Joe Morrell, Northern Conference; Ed Ritter, Western Conference; and Ray Saunders, Southern Conference. Network representatives are Louise Hinkley, Northern Conference; Caroline Longmoor, Midlands Conference; Dale Propp, Southern Conference; and David Whittall, Western Conference.

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New Jersey outreach provides personal touch

Service on the spot! That's the attraction of the thirty-six Service Center Libraries for the Print Handicapped now operating in New Jersey under the sponsorship of the regional library.

First introduced in 1984, the service centers, which are located in public libraries throughout the state, provide patrons with a local contact for registering for talking-book service. They also lend playback equipment and provide a small collection of books in disc and cassette format for browsing and "impulse" borrowing. The centers, which are a part of the libraries' local outreach efforts, are operated by public library staff members.

The service centers receive 100 flexible-disc books and 35 to 50 cassette books each year from the regional library. Each center may also receive additional cassettes and discs on a six-month rotational basis. Many of the participating libraries also have special aids such as magnifiers, closed circuit TV magnifiers, and Kurzweil Reading Machines. In fact, of the eleven Kurzweil machines in New Jersey, eight are located in service centers.

According to Deborah Toomey of the New Jersey regional library, who oversees the program, the service centers have been welcomed by both patrons and libraries. The number of participating public libraries has grown by ten since the program began. Patrons are enthusiastic because of the personal contact provided.

Mary Lou Graham, whose mother is a patron, picks up six or seven books a week at the Montclair service center. She can't say enough good things about the service, calling the staff "terrific people, who are very considerate and helpful." She adds that staff members "help patrons select books and tell us when new ones come in."

Catherine Appleyard, also a Montclair patron, is equally enthusiastic. She says, "I don't know what I'd do without my talking books; the service is an absolutely marvelous thing."

In 1984 the centers circulated a total of 7,883 discs and cassettes to patrons. The bulk of most patrons' reading material, however, continues to come from the regional library in Trenton.

The program receives no state funding to cover operating expenses. Materials and consultant services are provided by the regional library, and librarians staffing the centers attend an orientation session at the regional library.

The public libraries participating in the program are usually very service oriented, Deborah Toomey observes. In many instances service center libraries are involved in providing other services to handicapped persons.

The Montclair Public Library, for example, sponsored a Handicapped Awareness Week in May. Exhibits of interest to handicapped individuals were on display at the library throughout the week. On the final day, a workshop was held which featured, among other things, a film on blindness and a poster contest for children. More than seventy-five people attended the workshop.

Mary Harrell, coordinator of handicapped services at the library, notes that the workshop and its attendant publicity have attracted people to the center.

"People come in and take out ten or twelve talking books at a time. We can't keep cassettes in stock," says Ms. Harrell. "But we're delighted because we want to get handicapped people more involved with the library."

This involvement is also the goal of Susan D'Ottavio, Cumberland County Library extension/outreach librarian, who heads the Cumberland Service Center. As part of its outreach program, the Cumberland Library co-sponsored its fourth annual Handicapped

Winners of Handicapped Awareness Week poster contest display their creations at the Montclair, N.J., Public Library.

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Film Festival in October. Several hundred people attended the festival, which also featured exhibits and a "Kids on the Block" puppet show.

The Newark Public Library is reaching out in yet another way. In an attempt to reach the Hispanic population in the area, the center has translated information into Spanish and sponsored a number of Spanish radio spots.

The New Jersey Service Centers are off to a good start. Not only are they relieving the regional library of some of its machine-lending workload, but they are also reaching out to patrons and helping to incorporate them into the local library community.

And patron response has been summed up by user Catherine Appleyard, "I couldn't be more pleased."

Network exchange

Washington, D.C. With the help of Wanda Cox, senior mobile librarian, NLS patrons at two Washington senior residences can participate in the ALA-sponsored "Let's Talk About It" program for users of public libraries. The program provides a series of reading and discussion groups, which meet bi-weekly for a scholarly presentation and a book discussion. Because the seniors cannot get to the library for the evening meetings, Ms. Cox is bringing the program to them through videotapes of the presentations; discussions are held at the residences. NLS patrons read the books using cassettes from the NLS collections.

Colorado. James M. Schubert, for twelve years regional librarian for Colorado, received the Governor's Award for Outstanding Service from Governor Richard D. Lamm in a ceremony in September 1985. He was nominated for the award by the library staff for his dedication and effective leadership.

Barbara Goral became regional librarian effective November 18, 1985. Ms. Goral was regional librarian in Wayne County, Michigan, for the past five years. Prior to that she held positions at the Wayne Oakland Library Federation as head of reference and head of cataloging. She started in library service for blind and physically handicapped people in 1975 as assistant librarian at the Wayne County regional library.

Colorado regional librarian James Schubert (right) and his family with Colorado governor Richard Lamm

Vermont. Josephine Hess, Vermont regional librarian, uses a booth at the county fairs to spread the word about library services for blind and physically handicapped individuals. "People are isolated by geography as well as by handicap" in this mountainous rural state, she explains, but the fairs bring them together. Nursing homes even provide transportation to the fair. She adds that the state library system may seem remote and people may hesitate to call, but the booth at the fair is more accessible. "They see us and we become real people to them."

Ms. Hess takes her booths to both the state fair and the Tunbridge "World's Fair." Her exhibit features machine demonstrations and handout information about the library service. Teachers, potential patrons, and interested individuals from Vermont and surrounding states learn about the services and receive brochures. Ms. Hess also supplies other public-service information at her booths.

Michigan. The Michigan regional library will occupy a major portion of the ground floor in a new library building scheduled for completion in 1987. The new library, museum, and archives building will be part of the capitol complex of downtown Lansing.

The new facility will feature a central "Courtyard of the Counties" and will have a landscaped entrance and tree-bordered parking lots. It will serve as a cultural and research center for the state and will significantly improve the service capability of the library.

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Braille Institute Library staff members David Whittal (left) and Ben Maciel (right) explain labeling and packaging of recorded material at the Institute's workshop for librarians

California. The Braille Institute's annual Public Library Workshop attracted more than 100 librarians from public, university, and special libraries; retired librarians; Telephone Pioneers; and a braille transcriber.

The workshop featured keynote speaker Jane O'Connor, Braille Institute director of volunteer services and community centers, along with exhibits and a publicity roundtable discussion. Participants viewed the new E-1 easy cassette machine, the Echo voice synthesizer, and promotional videos produced by the Burbank Public Library and the Buena Park Library District.

Wisconsin. The Wisconsin regional library is sponsoring "The Touch of Art," the sixth national exhibit by blind artists. Co-sponsored by the Milwaukee Public Library, the exhibit ran from November through January at the Wher-McLenegan Gallery in Milwaukee. All of the artists whose works appear in the exhibit are legally blind. During the opening reception on November 2, visitors were invited to view and touch the exhibits.

Kansas. The Kansas regional library has begun a new publication, *Kansas Talking Book News*. The lead article of the annual newsletter's first edition sets forth the paper's purpose: "to clear up some of the mysteries of the Talking Books Service and to bring...news of what is going on statewide." The six-page foldover newsletter carries out the mystery-solving theme by explaining how the NLS service network works in relation to the consumer, and answering a much-asked question about magazine return. It also reports on a state-wide writing contest sponsored by the Kansas Council of Library Services for the Visually and Physically Handicapped.

North Carolina. Donald Wigent, a patron of the North Carolina regional library, enjoyed a fall tour as helmsman of the Elizabeth II, a replica of a sixteenth-century sailing ship. The helmsman in this type of vessel cannot see out, but sits below the quarterdeck and takes orders from above. To qualify for the position, Mr. Wigent memorized the necessary information about the ship, and he used a special compass with braille marking and an audible signal to keep the ship on course.

A piano technician at East Carolina University's School of Music, Mr. Wigent has had a life-long interest in sailing, and his reading choices reflect that interest. He and his family own a 21-foot sailboat. Mr. Wigent's 16-year-old son accompanied him on the Elizabeth II as a rigging boy.

The North Carolina regional library has produced a cassette book on the Elizabeth II, which they cited in their newsletter article about this novel adventure, for further information to North Carolina readers.

Georgia. Librarians from Georgia's regional and subregional libraries visited the CMLS contractor Eva-Tone, in Clearwater, Florida, in September. A tour of the plant and interviews with the Eva-Tone staff produced much informal education on the part of both groups, according to Jim DeJarnett, Georgia regional librarian, who recommends the trip to anyone visiting in the area. The Georgia librarians also visited the Multistate Center for the South and the Florida regional library while in the state.

The Albany subregional library has moved to the new main library in Albany. "This move to the central library incorporates us into the library system and gives us lots of exposure," explains Kathryn Sinquefield, subregional librarian. It also enables them to bring all programs into one location. The book collection, formerly housed in a "cramped" trailer, is now displayed on library shelves, and patrons can come in and browse. The specially designed computer program for record keeping and book service is available on an on-line computer. In addition, a separately located recording booth will be moved to the library as soon as possible and the volunteer recording will resume.

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Network-produced bibliographies. The following bibliographies are available from network libraries.

Judaica: A Bibliography of Jewish Literature is a selective bibliography of recorded and braille books dealing with Judaism and aspects of the Jewish culture. It includes six sections: adult fiction and literature, biography, children's section, cookbooks, history—general and Holocaust, and Judaism—religious customs, social customs, commentaries, and philosophy. Available in large print from the Florida regional library.

Christmas Talking Books. Annotated bibliography contains fifty-five citations of recorded titles. Available in large print from the Dupage, Illinois, subregional library.

Cassette Books for Children. Annotated listing of 281 titles of locally produced cassette books for children from kindergarten through grade 4. Available in large print from the New Jersey regional library.

Books about Handicaps. Covers all types of handicaps with vision emphasized. Includes print books, pamphlets, and commercial collections; 238 citations without annotations. Available in print from the Rhode Island regional library.

Rhode Island History Collection. Lists books and some lectures about Rhode Island on cassette and open-reel tapes. Includes twenty-two unannotated citations of locally produced material and commercial collection. Available in print from the Rhode Island regional library.

Texas

Research/Reading Center provides resources

Information for this article is from "Texas State Library's Research/Reading Center" by Melissa Locke Roberts, which appeared in Texas Libraries, *Vol. 46, No. 2 (Fall 1985).*

The Texas regional library has initiated a state-of-the-art Research/Reading Center that could be duplicated in libraries throughout the state.

"We designed this center as a pilot project to demonstrate successful applications using technology in a library setting that would enable disabled individuals to better function in a business environment," says Dale Propp, regional librarian.

The center is designed to meet the needs of the growing numbers of professionals who are disabled. The need is pointed up by a *USA Today* (May 1985) article reporting that more disabled people are entering the fields of politics, business, education, sports, advertising, and the media. These people need resources such as those the center offers. The article notes that even though 15 million disabled people of working age could work with training and resources (and most want to), 10 million are nevertheless unemployed.

Advances in computer technology such as that being piloted in the center allow disabled readers access to the same printed material that is available to the general public. As this technology becomes more readily available, it may be a powerful catalyst to project more of the blind and visually impaired population into the mainstream of society.

The project entails "setting up a room where our patrons can get hands-on experience with the technology, as we gain experience building a model program to show other libraries what can be done," adds Mr. Propp.

Along with Apollo Readers and tape and record players, the center houses a Kurzweil Reading Machine, microcomputers, and a braille printer. With the equipment in the center, patrons can read print copy, have copy translated to and from braille and print, and edit. They can even bring their own Braille-Edit disks and print out copies in either braille or standard print.

"We would eventually like to acquire software to load our bibliographic database online for access by modem. Then patrons who have computers at home could leave requests for library materials on an electronic bulletin board," says Larry Hutchison, information systems analyst.

In addition to its special technology, the Research/Reading Center, located adjacent to the Reference Unit in the regional library, includes all the amenities of a public library—a browsing collection, study tables, and a story hour for children.

Action by the Texas State Legislature may bring this technology within the reach of most Texans. A bill passed last spring provides reading machines for public libraries in every city of at least 50,000. It also appropriates up to $100,000 of available funds for reading machines and associated technology.

According to Mr. Hutchison, this action means that libraries could set up a system similar to the regional library's Research/Reading Center for as little as $6,500 of additional money.

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Overseas program gives service worldwide

Nancy King

The NLS program reaches out to United States citizens in sixty countries around the world. More than 350 patrons on six continents take advantage of the direct service provided by NLS. Many of these patrons live in the countries neighboring the U.S.; eighty-nine patrons live in Mexico and thirty-five in Canada.

Others are located in European countries such as the Federal Republic of Germany, which has fifty-five patrons; the United Kingdom with twelve patrons; France, ten; and Italy, ten. There are twenty-six patrons in Israel. Patrons are also located in countries such as Morocco, Thailand, Egypt, Australia, Ethiopia, and Belize.

The direct service is provided by the Consumer Relations Section to any eligible American citizen who lives abroad for a period of more than six months. Nancy King, the librarian responsible for overseas service, fills book and machine orders from patrons through the mail in much the same way as a regional or subregional library would. Ms. King became the librarian for American citizens outside the United States in January 1985. She was formerly a library technician in the NLS Collection Development Section.

International briefs

Denmark. A new committee is coordinating talking-book production in Denmark. Appointed by the Minister of Culture in May 1985, the permanent committee will coordinate public as well as commercial production, preventing duplication, promoting product standards, and facilitating exchange of master tapes as well as ideas and experiences. Jes Petersen of the Canister State Directorate of Public Libraries chairs the committee.

Danish libraries, readers, and politicians regard the local talking newspaper as a natural part of the libraries' general information function. Since 1981, the state has subsidized municipal talking newspapers; some fifty-four talking papers covering sixty-two municipalities have been produced. Municipal newspapers are published weekly on 60- or 90-minute tapes and provided free by the libraries.

Switzerland. The Bibliotheque Braille Romande in Geneva is one of four tape-lending libraries in Switzerland. The library in Geneva and one in Lausanne serve French-speaking Swiss, the library in Zurich stocks German-language material, and yet another library circulates tapes to Italian-speaking Swiss. The Geneva library was built in 1947, and its tape collection numbers 1,200 titles. Twenty-five volunteers come to the library twice a week to record in its two recording studios. The tapes are circulated to about 500 patrons, one-third of whom live outside of Switzerland.

The braille library, which is the only French braille collection in Switzerland, has approximately 2,300 hard-cover, hand-bound books. The books are transcribed and bound by forty volunteers. Last year, the library circulated more than 5,000 volumes to 130 patrons.

Great Britain. A new word processor provides a simple way of converting ordinary print to braille, Moon type, or large print. As a typist transcribes material, it appears from the system's printer in the new format. Moon or braille copy is transferred to encapsulated paper and heat treated to produce the embossed effect. The new system, called Bumble–Brunel University Braille, Moon, and Large Print Equipment–uses a 16-bit microprocessor, a laser printer, and specially written conversion software.

The Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) offers programs to meet a variety of special interests. A new feature from the music department is the inclusion of tape excerpts to illustrate music described in braille textbooks. This enables people interested in music but unable to read the braille music code to enjoy the books. The organization's braille and tape student libraries produce books for individual students. Through the RNIB and Leeds University Recording Centre, volunteers record books for local use and for the Student Tape Library. The Express Reading Service produces quickly short items on request.

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News

Australia, New South Wales. The Royal Blind Society's Talking Book of the Year for 1985 is *The Boy Adeodatus* by Bernard Smith. The book also won The Age Book of the Year Award.

USSR. The Russian Association of the Blind has presented NLS with two braille copies of the book *Repertoire de la Notation Musicale Braille*. The French-language books consist of two volumes each.

Israel. The Central Library for the Blind, Visually Impaired, and Handicapped at Netanya offers readers a variety of services. The library provides textbooks to enable blind children to integrate into regular classes. A mobile library visits hostels bringing service to persons who cannot hold ordinary books because of physical handicaps. In one of its newest projects, the library produces large-print books, for which there is a growing demand.

In the 1984–85 year, some 3,000 readers received talking books from the library. The library duplicated 2,257 books on cassettes and produced 546 talking books, including classics, textbooks, and books on Judaism and other topics, in a variety of languages.

Staff committee formed to explore technology

A committee has been formed at NLS as part of an effort to focus on developments in technology that affect library service for blind and physically handicapped individuals. The committee, which held its first monthly meeting in October, is exploring the feasibility of several technology-related topics.

The committee is chaired by Judith Dixon, head of the Consumer Relations Section. Members are Richard Evensen, head of the Braille Development Section; Alice Freeman, program management assistant; Pat O'Brimski, Recording Studio director; Lloyd Rasmussen, engineer; Linda Redmond, reference librarian; and Steve Prine, network consultant.

The committee's discussions are wide-ranging and include areas such as applications of equipment and software for patrons, network libraries, public libraries, braille transcribers, and blind and physically handicapped staff members of network libraries and NLS.

Specific topics to be explored are the establishment of an NLS communications center capable of producing large-print and braille versions of print material, the preparation of information for patrons on computer applications and related topics, patron access to NLS catalogs in an automated form, and developments of standards for the narration of computer books.

Also under study is the possibility of a review and evaluation of equipment in use by blind persons employed in network libraries and their access to the READS system. Review of equipment being used by public, academic, and special libraries to make collections more accessible is also being explored; as well as equipment being used by braille transcribers.

The reports of the committee's discussions are being made available to various sections at NLS to aid in making future decisions.

NLS technology committee members (from left) Pat O'Brimski, Steve Prine, Judith Dixon, Alice Freeman, Linda Redmond, Dick Evensen, and Lloyd Rasmussen

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Service discussed with South American visitor

Conrado Zuluaga, director of the National Library of Colombia, visited NLS in November to discuss the use of tactile maps. He and Frank Kurt Cylke, NLS director, talked about plans to develop and implement library service for blind and physically handicapped individuals in Colombia. They also considered the wider possibilities for extending such service to other South American countries.

NLS has begun preparations for calling a meeting of interested Spanish speakers in the Americas to consider cooperative services. The aim is to promote exchange of materials and information by developing services where they don't exist and expanding them where they do exist.

Says Mr. Cylke, "South America would have the advantage of North American technology, and we could obtain books and magazines for our Spanish-speaking patrons. Most of all, there would be immeasurable advantages to the blind community."

A possible site for the meeting would be Puerto Rico or a Latin American country.

Besides Mr. Cylke, NLS staff members working on the project are James Herndon, foreign-language librarian, and Mona Werner, head of the Collection Development Section.

Frank Kurt Cylke, NLS director, and Conrado Zuluaga, director of the National Library of Colombia, discuss the use of tactile maps.

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